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NOTES ON GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Serpentes, Dipsadidae, Echinantherini, *Taeniophallus poecilopogon* (Cope, 1863): Rediscovery in Argentina

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The colubrid snake genus *Taeniophallus* Cope, 1895 has a complex taxonomic history (Myers 1974; Di-Bernardo and Lema 1987; Myers and Cadle 1994; Cacivio et al. 1999; Schargel et al. 2005; Santos-Jr et al. 2008; Zaher et al. 2009) and currently two species are considered to occur in Argentina: *Taeniophallus occipitalis* and *Taeniophallus poecilopogon* (Koslowsky 1898; Serié 1936; Peters and Orejas-Miranda 1970; Myers 1974; Williams and Francini 1991; Di-Bernardo 1992; Cei 1993; Scrocchi et al. 2000; Cabrera 2001; Giraudo 2001; Giraudo and Scrocchi 2002).

Taeniophallus poecilopogon has the southernmost distribution of the genus, inhabiting open savannahs in Pampean and Espinal phytogeographic provinces (Di-Bernardo and Lema 1987; Cei 1993; Cabrera 2001; Giraudo 2001; Giraudo and Scrocchi 2002), and is known from southern Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina, and Uruguay (Koslowsky 1898; Devincenzi 1925; Peters and Orejas-Miranda 1970; Myers 1974; Di-Bernardo and Lema 1987; Di-Bernardo 1992; Cei 1993; Gonzáles and Hamilton 1998; Achaval-Elena 2001; Giraudo 2001; Giraudo and Scrocchi 2002; Achaval and Olmos 2003; Carreira et al. 2005).

In Argentina *Taeniophallus poecilopogon* has been reported in the literature for Buenos Aires, Corrientes, Entre Ríos, and Misiones provinces (Koslowsky 1898; Serié 1936; Freiberg 1939; Abalos and Mischis 1975; Williams and Francini 1991; Cei 1993; Scrocchi et al. 2000; Giraudo 2001; Giraudo and Scrocchi 2002). Despite these multiple reports, specimens of *Taeniophallus poecilopogon* from Argentina are poorly represented in herpetological collections, and only two specimens are known until now. One of them was housed in the Herpetological Collection of the *Museo Argentino de Ciencias Naturales "Bernardino Rivadavia"*, MACN without numeration, and with "Argentina" as the only locality data. Unfortunately ongoing curatorial efforts on this collection failed to find this specimen and it should be considered lost for the time being. Probably the records from Corrientes and Misiones are based on this specimen (Giraudo 2001; Giraudo and Scrocchi 2002), and the record for Entre Ríos (Freiberg 1939) is not supported by specimens in museum collections. The other voucher specimen is deposited in the *Museo di Torino*, MZUT R-819, from Las Flores, Buenos Aires province (Figure 1A), illustrated by Jan and Sordelli (1866, Volume I, Livraison 16, Plate 1, Figure 3) and by Cei (1993, Figure 99: C, D; p. 669), and represents a historical record of *Taeniophallus poecilopogon* in Argentina.

In the present contribution we report and describe the second specimen of *Taeniophallus poecilopogon* from Argentina with precise locality and complete data: MACN 39227, an adult roadkill, ca. 273 mm body length and ca. 86 mm tail length, the tail represents 24 percent of total length, found in the *Ruta Provincial* # 11, 10 km south from Magdalena city, Partido de Magdalena, Buenos Aires province, Argentina (35°08'32" S, 57°24'43" W) (Figure 1B); collected on August 28th 2008.

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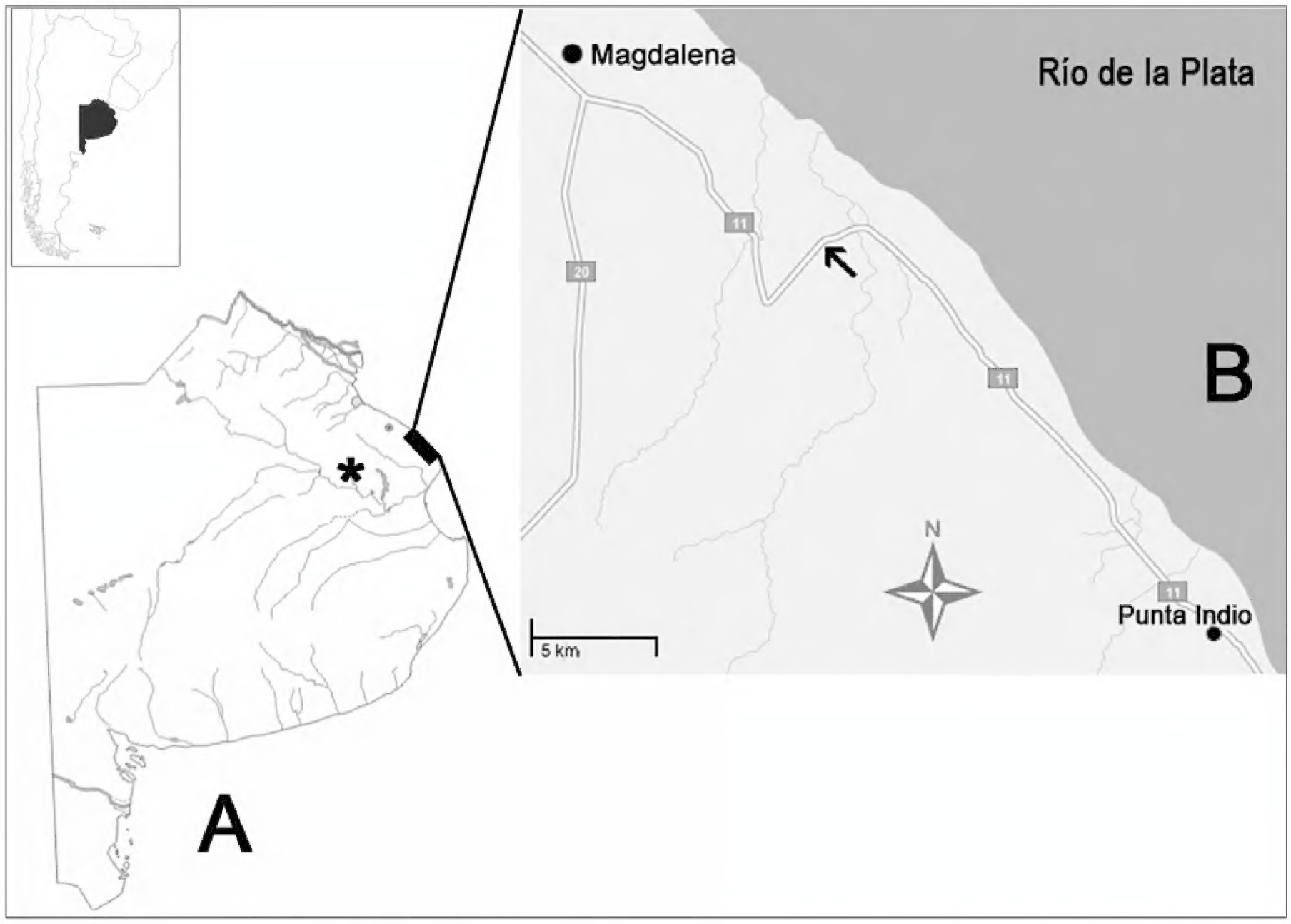

Figure 1. Distribution map of *Taeniophallus poecilopogon* in Argentina. A. (*) locality of MZUT R-819. B. Detailed map of the locality of MACN 39227, arrow points to collection place in Ruta Provincial Nº 11, Partido de Magdalena, Buenos Aires province, Argentina.

The specimen MACN 39227 has 17 smooth dorsal scales without reduction and without apical pits, 165 ventrals (the highest number reported for the species), cloacal plate divided, 57 subcaudals, 7(3+4)/7(3+4) supralabials, 8(4)/8(4) infralabials, one loreal in contact with second supralabial only, 1+2/1+2 oculars, and 1+2/1+2 temporal scales.

The color pattern of the specimen MACN 39227 is longitudinally striped; a conspicuous white line over the canthus rostralis reaches the temporal region, were it is interrupted by dark coloration on the top of the head; dark head cap extends around and below the corner of the mouth; heavily dappled labials and chins; edges of the venter and sides of the body and tail are dark to about the middle on the ca. 4th dorsal scales; a bright red coloration appears on the ca. 20th ventral scale and extends into the tail.

The locality is situated 110 km (airline) west from Montevideo Department, Uruguay (the southernmost locality in Uruguay, separated from Magdalena by the Río de la Plata); and 182 km northeast from Las Flores, Buenos Aires province, Argentina. The place where MACN 39227 has been found belongs to the Talares (*Celtis tala*) district in the Espinal phytogeographic province (Cabrera 1968), and is a rural zone with cattle rising and woodlands of *Eucalyptus* spp., located in the margins of the biosphere reserve "Parque Costero del Sur" (Figure 2). In this reserve, where remnants of particular woodlands of *Celtis tala* and the endemic *Phytolacca tetramera* are mixed with natural grasslands and wetlands, the species is very likely to be present.

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Figure 2. Habitat of *T. poecilopogon* near "*Parque Costero del Sur*" biosphere reserve, Partido de Magdalena, Buenos Aires province, Argentina.

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